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ABSTRACTS OF SIKH STUDIES

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LIVE WITHOUT LONGING

Dr Kulwant Singh Phull*

Change is the law of nature. Over time, change happens everywhere, whetherin a worldly or natural society. Significant changes have occurred during the preceding four-five decades in how we live, eat, drink, and behave. Due to ever-expanding human desires, the load of work, rapid technological advancements insocial engineering,mobile phones, and internet systems, cut-throat competition, and urbanization, the joint family system has been replaced by thesingle-family system. Burgeoning population burden, excessive demand, rising prices, swift mechanization, and privatization have led to a decline in the purchasing power of money but pushed up the people's run for more money. Entire families including husband and wife have been compelled to work to support the family properly, and even pushed more for migration abroad. The eating habits of people, especially youth, have significantly changed. Instead of simple home-cooked food, pizzas, burgers, noodles, maggies, cookies, pastries, soft drinks, McDonald's, Subway, KFC, etc., oily, sugar-rich, and fatty attractively packed foodhas taken place. Thanks to aggressive advertisements, mushrooming of eateries, fast-food bazaars, restaurants, shopping malls, mobile phones, and the entrance of home supply service companies like Zomato, Swiggy, Blinkin, etc., such food has entered the common homes. Due to the single-family system and working couples, most youths have started preferringmarket-basedfast food instead of preparing the same at home. Irregular and untimely eating along with scurrying and scrambling for work has

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become the cause of numerous diseases like indigestion, constipation, obesity, stress, high blood pressure, diabetes, etc. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN) Hyderabad, established in 1918, about 56.4 percent of the total disease burden in the country is due to unhealthy dietary habits. And, because of this, nearly 25 percent of Indians are overweight or obese [1]. Even though most of the young generation is aware and addicted to social media, they deliberately play havoc on their health just for the taste of their tongue. Carelessly, owing to sheepish behavior or out of compulsion or social status, sometimes even elderly people too have started opting for market-cooked fast food instead of home-cooked. Even at several places, people including religious leaders have begun serving such fast food as a community langer. The Gurbani lines of Bhagat Kabeer Sahib seem to be perfectly applicable here: -

ਕਬੀਰ ਮਨੁ ਜਾਨੈ ਸਭ ਬਾਤ ਜਾਨਤ ਹੀ ਅਉਗਨੁ ਕਰੈ ॥
ਕਾਹੇ ਕੀ ਕੁਸਲਾਤ ਹਾਥਿ ਦੀਪੁ ਕੂਏ ਪਰੈ ॥ ੨੧੬ ॥

Kabeer, the mortal knows everything, and knowing, one still makes mistakes
What good is a lamp in one's hand, if one falls into the well.

(SGGS, p. 1376)

There is no denying that healthy food and drink is a basic human right for fulfilling one's stomach. A man wanders for all this from door to door, from place to place, and even from country to country facing numerous difficulties and hardships. But instead of having a nutritious diet and lifestyle as the Guru Sahibs and Gurbani prescribe, we mortals follow our own will or tongue-taste. Omnipotent Almighty Akal Purakh Waheguru, infinite and boundless, has created and spruced the human and arranged food and drink for him. Even before aninfant is born, during pregnancy, the Almighty arranges milk for the newborn child through the mother's breast, considered the most nutritious, healthy, and balanced food in the world even though the newborn baby does not have any teeth in the mouth. Regarding this, Pancham Patshah Guru Arjan Dev ji enlightens us in the Sukhmani Sahib in the first stanza of the third *Ashtapadee*: -

ਰਮਈਆ ਕੇ ਗੁਨ ਚੇਤਿ ਪਰਾਨੀ ॥ ਕਵਨ ਮੂਲ ਤੇ ਕਵਨ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਾਨੀ ॥
ਜਿਨਿ ਤੂੰ ਸਾਜਿ ਸਵਾਰਿ ਸੀਗਾਰਿਆ ॥ ਗਰਭ ਅਗਨਿ ਮਹਿ ਜਿਨਹਿ ਉਬਾਰਿਆ॥

ਬਾਰ ਬਿਵਸਥਾ ਤੁਝਹਿ ਪਿਆਰੈ ਦੂਧ ॥
Think of the Glory of the All-Mighty Lord,
O Mortale what is your origin, and what is your appearance?
He who fashioned, adorned, and decorated you in the fire of the womb,
He preserved youe in your infancy,
He gave you milk to drinke in the flower of your youth,
He gave you food, pleasure, and understandinge

(SGGS, p. 266).

Even, the third lord Satguru Guru Amar Das ji too has expressed similar views about this idea in the 28th verse of AnandSahib: -

ਮਾਤਾ ਕੇ ਉਦਰ ਮਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲ ਕਰੇ ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮਨਹੁ ਵਿਸਾਰੀਐ ॥
ਮਨਹੁ ਕਿਉ ਵਿਸਾਰੀਐ ਏਵਡੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਜਿ ਅਗਨਿ ਮਹਿ ਆਹਾਰੁ ਪਹੁਚਾਵਏ ॥
He nourished in mother's womb, why forget Him from the Minde
Why forget from the mind such a Great Giver, who gave sustenance in the fire of Wombe.

(SGGS p. 920)

Gurbani nowhere forbids anyone from eating good, healthy, and nutritious food, albeit cautions us about eating best, little, and moderately as per one's need. According to the famous Sikh Scholar Bhai Sahib Bhai Kahn Singh ji Nabha's magnum opus **Gurmat Martand,** Volume I, scholars have described five types of food and drinkables: - 1. **Eatables** or *Bhakhy* (type of food to be eaten with the help of teeth or molars, like roti, puri, kachori, etc.) 2. **Feast** or *Bhojay* (to be eaten only with the help of molars such as grains, buckwheat, almonds, etc.) 3. **Glutinous** or *Leahy* (foodsthat can be licked with the tongue likelapsi, sauce, etc.) 4.**Drinkables**or *paey* (like milk, curd, juice, syrup, etc.) 5. **Rasp**or *Chosey* (suckable fruits like mango, sugarcane, berries, etc.).While using these, superstitious beliefs, illiteracy,illusion-based impurity, and pure sins are not acceptable in Gurumat, as outlined in the scriptures of Hinduism. Healthy and pure eating, drinking, and dressing up have been enacted keeping the health of the body as the main point so that one can live in moderation and always be blissful both in mind and body [4]. You can eat only If you are very hungry but never overeat. The 'Khatkarmis', i.e., those whofollow six-fold duties prescribed by the Hindu philosophy, say that this or that food should not be eaten, are delusional. As per

Gurumat, all grains are pure. The food, prasad, and drink are all pure, for whom the sustenance which has been obtained by dusting, where its sustenance has been mixed, falls on the ground and without remedy [4]. That means there should be no superstition about it. The founder of the Sikh way of life Guru Nanak Dev Ji says in the third sloka recorded with the 18th verse of Asa's War:-

ਜੰਮਣੁ ਮਰਣਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੈ ਭਾਣੈ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਖਾਣਾ ਪੀਣਾ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹੈ ਦਿਤੋਨੁ ਰਿਜਕੁ ਸੰਬਾਹਿ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਨ੍ੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੁਝਿਆ ਤਿਨ੍ਾ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਨਾਹਿ ॥
All impurity comes from doubt and attachment to dualitye
Birth and death are subject to the command of the Lord's wille
Through His will, we come and goe
Eating and drinking are pure since the Lord nourishes alle
O Nanak, the Gurmukhs, who understand the Lord, are not stained by impurity

(SGGS p. 472-73)

However, in actual life, most people often follow the taste of their tongue unaware ofthe Gurbani directions, and eat unnecessary and disorderly food, which often becomes painful for the human body. Consequently, bad disorders/thoughts directly rooted in the person's mind begin to arise. About which Guru Nanak Patshahdescribed in Siri Ragu:-

ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਖਾਣਾ ਖੁਸੀ ਖੁਆਰੁ ॥
ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਧੈ ਤਨੁ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰ ॥
O, Baba, the pleasures of other foods are falsee
Eating them, the body is ruined, andwickedness and corruption enter into the mind.

(SGGS p. 16)

So Gurbani always motivates us to relish a simple, healthy, and blissful life and for that guides us on what should be eaten or what should not be eaten. Regarding choosing to eat right, Guru Nanak Patshah warns us in the 'Vaar Suhi' that we should not eat any such food at all or should not indulge in any activitythat causes belly fat or obesity:-

ਸਉ ਓਲਾਮ੍ੇ ਦਿਨੈ ਕੇ ਰਾਤੀ ਮਿਲਨ੍ਿ ਸਹੰਸ ॥
ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਲਾਹਣੁ ਛਡਿ ਕੈ ਕਰੰਗੀ ਲਗਾ ਹੰਸੁ ॥
ਫਿਟੁ ਇਵੇਹਾ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਇ ਵਧਾਇਆ ਪੇਟੁ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਵਿਣੁ ਸਭੋ ਦੁਸਮਨੁ ਹੇਤੁ ॥

He receives hundreds and thousands of reprimands, day and nighte
The swan-soul has renounced the Lord's Praises and attached itself to a rotting carcass
Cursed is that life, in which one only eats to fill his belly.
O Nanak, without the True Name, all one's friends turn to enemies.

(SGGS p. 790)

Dashmesh Pita Guru Gobind Singh ji too has written in Raga Ramkali in Sri Dasam Granth Sahib while recommending to eat and sleep little: -

ਅਲਪ ਅਹਾਰ ਸੁਲ ਪਸੀ ਨਿੰਦ੍ਰਾ ਦਯਾ ਛਿਮਾ ਤਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ॥
ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਦਾ ਨਿਰਬਾਹਿ ਬੋਹੈਬੋ ਤ੍ਰਿਗੁਣ ਅਤੀਤ॥
(ਸ੍ਰੀ ਦਸਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਅੰਗ ੭੦੯)

Eat less and sleep less, cherish mercy and forgiveness| |
Practice gentleness and contentment and remain free from three modese

(Sri Dasam Granth Sahib, p 709)

Thus,one should eat less, sleep less, and love kindness and mercy. Patience should be maintained with satisfaction. One should live a life by overcoming the three qualities of Rajo, Tamo, and Sato. Dietary guidelines issued by the country's nearly 106-year-old National Institute of Nutrition too confirmed that unhealthy eating leads to an increase in diabetes,constipation, hypertension, and heart attacks in the country. Taking a healthy diet along with getting more physical activity can largely prevent these diseases [2]. Nutritionists also suggest people eat good food and followthe advice that *'Eat like a bird, but work like an animal'*, that is, instead of eating to your contentment, one should eat little by little as per one's need. But nowadays it can often be seen that how people behave in marriage palaces or hotels or even religious places on the occasion of weddings or parties or religious functionsis exactly opposite of this saying, i.e. most people eat and drink like animals but live a lazy luxurious life in cars and air-conditioned homes/ palaces/hotels. Many times, while relishingsuch food and drinkables, people don't even bother about the fact that of course the samedoes belong to others, but the stomach is their own. There in a day, while relishing people even madly like to overeat unaccounted food despite thereafter being compelled to takemuch more costly medicines for

numerous days along with a painful life.

Perhaps, owing to this, Guru Nanak Dev ji cautioned us against eating delicious food in Malaar raga and stated that just like worms of maggots (Vishta) are born in manure and die again in manure. Unfortunately, the more people enjoy the taste, the more diseases spread to them.

ਬਿਸਟਾ ਕੀਟ ਭਏ ਉਤ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਉਤ ਹੀ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਇਆ ॥
ਅਧਿਕ ਸੁਆਦ ਰੋਗ ਅਧਿਕਾਈ ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਸਹਜੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

And so, he becomes a maggot in manure, and in that, he is absorbed. The more he tastes, the more he is diseased; without the Guru, there is no peace and poise ||2||

(SGGS, p. 1255)

Even, famous Sufi Saint Sheikh Farid Sahib also warned us regardinga good diet in his 28th sloka and said that one should relish'rukhi-missi' i.e. plain bread which onehas earned with one's own hands and one's hunger is salted or bhaji with bread. Those who relish 'chopri' i.e. buttered bread/delicious things suffer a lot of painmeans make people sick by drinking:-

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਰੋਟੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਕਾਠ ਕੀ ਲਾਵਣੁ ਮੇਰੀ ਭੁਖ ॥
ਜਿਨਾ ਖਾਧੀ ਚੋਪੜੀ ਘਣੇ ਸਹਨਿਗੇ ਦੁਖ ॥

O' Fareed, my bread is made of wood, and hunger is my appetizer e *Those who eat buttered bread will suffer in terrible pain. ||28||*

(SGGS, p.1379)

People who eat home-cooked meals consume fewer calories than those who rely on commercial market-based fast food. Home-cooked food is commonly low in carbohydrates, fats, and sugar because when one cooks the same at home with control over the ingredients, and can consume them as per one's need. Fresh produce, low protein, and whole grains can be chosen for a healthy diet. Home-cooked meals can be enriched with nutrients by including a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and lean proteins. While market-based fast food, on the other hand, is full of saturated fat, sodium, and empty calories [2]. Regular consumption of such food can create health problems like indigestion, constipation, obesity, heart disease, etc. However, it is believed that sharing and enjoying home-cooked food with family

members increases mutual love, harmony, and communication, which contributes significantly to the mental and physical well-being of children. A study published in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics showed that family meals can help reduce childhood obesity.

So, in brief, simple home-cooked food is much better, healthier, and more nutritious than market-processed fast food. One should eat fresh seasonal fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and fat according to one's pocket, need, body structure, and weight to avoid market junk/ fast food and take simple nutritious home-cooked food and maximize physical activity to keep oneself fit, fine and healthy [3]. In this way, everybody can pleasantly relish his precious life by meditating on the Almighty Lord Akal PurakhWaheguru while remaining in the ascendant spirits. In his 29th sloka, Sheikh Farid Sahib advised us to maintain good health and said, O man! Akal Purukh Waheguru, who blesses the rough-dry plain dal roti, eats it, drinks cold water, is patient, and thanks the Supreme Father for this gift. Don't feel yourself sad by seeing other people eating well:-

ਰੁਖੀ ਸੁਖੀ ਖਾਇ ਕੈ ਠੰਢਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਪੀਉ ॥
ਫਰੀਦਾ ਦੇਖਿ ਪਰਾਈ ਚੋਪੜੀ ਨਾ ਤਰਸਾਏ ਜੀਉ ॥ ੨੯ ॥

Eat dry bread, and drink cold water.
O'Fareed, if you see someone else's buttered bread, do not envy him for it.

(SGGS p. 1379)

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ABSTRACTS OF SIKH STUDIES

OBJECTIVES

1. **To bring the latest advances in Sikh Studies to the notice of scholars and general readers.**
2. **To project a correct image of Sikhism and the Sikh Community in India as well as abroad.**
3. **To watch, report and rebut any distortions or mis- representations of Sikh Religion and its History.**
4. **To serve as a living link, and provide coordination among organisations engaged in promotion of Sikh Studies.**
5. **To highlight problems of Sikh diaspora, and suggest solutions.**
6. **To arrange reviews of important publications relating to Sikhism.**
7. **To assist readers in framing an informed opinion on matters relating to Sikhism and Sikh Studies.**
8. **To give publicity to activities of various Sikh Societies around the world.**
9. **To act as a forum for expression of readers' views.**
10. **To advertise appropriate literature on Sikhism.**

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